

InStyle

The 12 Best Scar Creams to Fade Every Type of Scar, Tested & Reviewed

It's time to leave old wounds behind.

By [Irene Richardson](#) and [Bianca Kratky](#) | July 22, 2024



Acquiring scars takes no effort—my worst one comes from a tumble I took out of a tree at nine years old, whereas my most recent finger wound is courtesy of bagel day and an unfortunate knife slip. [Fading scars](#), however, is another (long, frustrating) story. Applying scar creams can lessen their appearance over time and possibly help avoid an in-office procedure.

What to Keep in Mind

- **Type of Scar:**
- **Atrophic:** The most common type of an atrophic mark is an acne scar. They leave sunken or indented depressions and they form when there is "insufficient collagen production during the wound healing process," says board-certified dermatologist [Connie Yang, M.D., FAAD](#) at [PFRANKMD](#) by Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank.
- **Hypertrophic:** Unlike an atrophic scar, hypertrophic scars form when there is an *overproduction* of collagen as it heals. "These scars are thick, firm lesions raised above the skin, but they do not extend beyond the area of the original wound," says [Dr. Yang](#). "Silicone sheets can help prevent hypertrophic or keloid scars but are most effective when used early on in the wound healing process," she says.
- **Keloid:** "Keloids form due to excessive collagen production that continues even after the wound has healed and often occurs in those with a genetic predisposition," says [Dr. Yang](#). Like a hypertrophic wound, a keloid scar is also thick and raised, except "They extend beyond the boundaries of the original wound," she says. These scars may itch or have a burning sensation," adds [Dr. Yang](#).

- **Application:** Combination therapy—a.k.a. using two scar fading formulas, like a cream *and* a sheet, simultaneously—is also helpful, says **Dr. Yang**. “I prefer placing silicone sheets over a gel or cream when it comes to surgical scars because they provide additional pressure and occlusion.”
- **Silicone-Based Formulas:** Those with sensitive or eczema-prone skin should proceed with caution when it comes to strong retinoids or hydroquinone, says **Dr. Yang**, as they're two of the usual suspects when it comes to triggering irritation. She recommends easing into a scar treatment slowly, applying the formula only once or twice a week until the skin builds up tolerance.
- **Collagen-Stimulating Actives:** “[Vitamin C](#) has antioxidant and collagen-stimulating properties. It can be helpful for post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, a form of ‘scarring’ left behind by acne or other trauma to the skin,” says **Dr. Yang**. She adds that managing expectations is equally important to any formula you use. “Its collagen-stimulating properties, while great for anti-aging, are not enough to correct acne scars or stretch marks,” says **Dr. Yang**.

Your Questions, Answered

How do you speed up scar fading?

Dr. Yang adds that silicone sheets do their best work during the initial healing period “to help improve the final appearance,” but if you wait until the scar has formed, then “in-office treatments will be most helpful.”

- **Dr. Connie Yang** practices in New York City at **PFRANKMD** by Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank. She’s a fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology and a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.